The Development of Australia’s Oceans Policy: Change and Stability in a Policy Community

by

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DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University of Tasmania or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis.

Joanna Vince
June 2004

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ABSTRACT

In December 1998, the Howard Government released Australia’s Oceans Policy, a major initiative focused at providing a framework for implementing integrated ecosystem based management of Australia’s vast marine domain. This thesis utilises a policy community approach to review the processes and institutions that led to the development of Australia’s Oceans Policy. It argues that despite significant policy change affected by both external and domestic policy drivers, a key element in shaping responses to the policy has been stability within the policy community shaped paradoxically by ‘offshore federalism’ that has made it difficult to implement a fully integrated oceans policy.

Analysis of the development and implementation of the Australia’s Oceans Policy indicates that change to ocean related policies embodied in the policy framework have been driven by several interrelated factors. These include debates over appropriate management of resources within and between sectoral groups; coordination of marine resource management between state and Commonwealth governments; and Commonwealth commitments to international instruments. New institutional arrangements established by Australia’s Oceans Policy such as the National Oceans Office, National Oceans Ministerial Board, National Oceans Advisory Group and Regional Marine Plan Steering Committees, reflect a commitment towards integrated ocean management but at the same time confront the legal and jurisdictional framework established following a quarter century of ‘offshore federalism’.
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ACRONYMS

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia     AFFA
Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation      APEC
Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council ANZECC
Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics ABARE
Australian Committee for the World Conservation Union ACIUCN
Australian Conservation Foundation ACF
Australian Fisheries Council AFC
Australian Fisheries Management Authority AFMA
Australian Fishing Industry Council AFIC
Australian Fishing Zone AFZ
Australian Geological Survey Organisation AGSO
Australian Local Governments Association ALGA
Australian Marine Industries and Sciences Council AMISC
Australian Marine Science and Technology Company AMSAT
Australian Nature Conservation Agency ANCA
Australian Public Service APS
Broken Hill Propriety BHP
Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources CCAMLR
Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities CRAMRA
Council of Australian Governments COAG
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation CSIRO
Department of Environment, Sport and Territories DEST
Department of Industry, Science and Resources DISR
Department of Transport and Regional Services DOTRS
Ecologically Sustainable Development ESD
Exclusive Economic Zone EEZ
Fishing Industry Policy Council of Australia FIPCA
Global Environmental Outlook GEO
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority GBRMPA
Heads of Marine Agencies Group HOMA
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and the Arts

Humane Society International

Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment

Marine and Coastal Community Network

Marine Protected Area

Marine Protected Areas

Marine Resource Conservation Working Group

Memorandum of Understanding

Ministerial Advisory Group on Oceans Policy

Multilateral High Level Conference

National Coastal Action Program

National Fishing Industry Council

National Oceans Advisory Group

National Oceans Office

Natural Heritage Trust

Nongovernmental Organisation

Ocean Rescue 2000

Offshore Constitutional Settlement

Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency

Regional Marine Plans

Resource Assessment Commission

South East Regional Marine Plan

State of the Marine Environment Report

Sustainable Development Advisory Committee

Third Meeting of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea

United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

United Nations Environment Program

United Nations Law of the Sea Convention

Western and Central Pacific

World Conservation Union

World Wide Fund for Nature
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronyms</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tables and Figures</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter One
**Policy Communities, Policy Change and Policy Transfer**
1. Introduction                                                          11
2. American Research                                                     13
3. British Research                                                      19
4. Assessing British and American Research                                29
5. Canadian Research                                                     32
6. Australian Research                                                   41
7. Policy Change                                                         46
8. Policy Transfer as a Model of Policy Change                            48
9. Policy Transfer Networks and the Policy Community                      59
10. Other Avenues of Change within the Policy Community?                  63
11. Conclusion                                                           67

## Chapter Two
**Ocean and Marine Resource Management: Federation to 1990**
1. Introduction                                                          69
2. The Constitution, Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations          71
3. Fisheries                                                            76
   3.1 Pre-Federation to *Commonwealth Fisheries and Pearl Fisheries* Acts 1952 76
   3.2 The Development of Commonwealth Fisheries Administration           84
4. Offshore Oil and Petroleum Mining                                      88
   4.1 The Offshore Policy Developments During the 1960s                  88
   4.2 The Offshore Policy Developments During the 1970s                  93
5. The 1979 Offshore Constitutional Settlement (OCS)                      98
   5.1 The Legislative Package                                            100
   5.2 The Offshore ‘Petroleum Package’                                   103
   5.3 The Fisheries Package                                              103
   5.4 The Great Barrier Reef Package                                      105
6. Intergovernmental Relations Following the Enactment of the Offshore Constitutional Settlement 106
7. Conclusion                                                            107
Chapter Three
Ocean and Coastal Policy Developments During the 1980s and 1990s
1. Introduction 110
2. Marine Science and Technology 111
3. Ocean Rescue 2000 113
4. The Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment 116
5. Ecologically Sustainable Development 120
6. Coastal Zone Management - Commonwealth 125
7. Coastal Zone Management - State Responses 141
8. Conclusion 151

Chapter Four
External Factors and their Impact on the Development of Australia’s Oceans Policy
1. Introduction 153
2. International Instruments and Ocean Regimes 155
   2.1 The Law of the Sea 156
   2.2 Prevention of Pollution 162
   2.3 The Antarctic Treaty and Australia’s Antarctic and Southern Ocean Maritime Responsibilities 164
   2.4 UNCED 170
   2.5 UNEP 175
   2.6 Regional Influences 177
3. External Domestic Influences 183
   3.1 The Legacy of New Federalism During Oceans Policy Development 184
   3.2 Changes to the Public Service and the Development of Ocean Institutions 187
4. Conclusion 192

Chapter Five
1. Introduction 194
2. Why an Oceans Policy? 196
3. The Oceans Policy Process 202
4. Marine Science and Technology 211
5. Issues and Background Papers 213
7. NGO Responses to the Issues Paper 235
8. MAGOP’s Response to the Issues Paper 237
9. Conclusion: The Final Steps Prior to the Release of Australia’s Oceans Policy 237
**Chapter Six**  
*Australia’s Oceans Policy Development and Implementation Process 1998 – 2003*  
1. Introduction 240  
2. The Release of *Australia’s Oceans Policy* 241  
3. *Australia’s Marine Science and Technology Plan* 247  
4. The Roles of New and Existing Institutional Arrangements 250  
   4.1 The National Oceans Ministerial Board 252  
   4.2 The National Oceans Office 253  
   4.3 The National Oceans Advisory Group 258  
   4.4 ANZECC 259  
   4.5 Regional Marine Plan Steering Committees 260  
5. The Implementation Process 261  
6. Responses to *Australia’s Oceans Policy* and its Implementation 271  
7. Conclusion 276  

**Chapter Seven**  
*Australia’s Oceans Policy Community: A Continuum in Marine Policy Development*  
1. Introduction 278  
2. Australia’s Oceans Policy Community 1982 – 1983:  
The Implementation of the Offshore Constitutional Settlement 280  
   2.1 OCS Policy Community – Membership 280  
   2.2 OCS Policy Community – Integration 284  
   2.3 OCS Policy Community - Resources and Power 284  
3. Australia’s Oceans Policy Community 1997 – 1998:  
The Development of *Australia’s Oceans Policy* 285  
   3.1 Oceans Policy Community 1997 - 1998 Membership 287  
   3.2 Oceans Policy Community 1997 - 1998 Integration 288  
   3.3 Oceans Policy Community 1997 - 1998 Resources and Power 289  
4. Australia’s Oceans Policy Community 2001 – 2003:  
The Implementation of *Australia’s Oceans Policy* - The Development of the South East Regional Marine Plan 290  
   4.1 Oceans Policy Community 2001 - 2003 Membership 292  
   4.2 Oceans Policy Community 2001 – 2003 Integration 296  
   4.3 Oceans Policy Community 2001– 2003 Resources and Power 297  
5. Stability and Change within Australia’s Oceans Policy Community 298  
   5.1 Management of Ocean Resources and Intergovernmental Coordination 299  
   5.2 External Pressures 312  
      5.2.1 State Parties to International Instruments 312  
      5.2.2 Public Sector Reforms 318  
   5.3 Stability in the Oceans Policy Community 318  
6. Changes Beyond 2003 – Conclusion 320  

**Conclusion** 322  

**References** 327
TABLES AND FIGURES

FIGURES

1.1 Theoretical Relationships Among Three Kinds of Intergovernmental Networks 18
1.2 Dimensions of Policy Style 21
1.3 The Policy Community 34
1.4 From Lesson-Drawing to Coercive Transfer 55
1.5 The Amended Policy Community 62

6.1 The Institutional Arrangements for Australia’s Oceans Policy 251

7.1 Australia’s Oceans Policy Community During the Implementation of the Offshore Constitutional Settlement 1982 – 1983 281
7.2 Australia’s Oceans Policy Community During the Development of Australia’s Oceans Policy 1997 – 1998 286
7.3 Australia’s Oceans Policy Community During the Implementation of Australia’s Oceans Policy 2001 – 2003 291

TABLES

1.1 Types of Policy Networks: Characteristics of Policy Communities and Issue Networks 24
1.2 Policy Community and Policy Network: the Wilks and Wright Model 28
1.3 Groupings of Policy Networks 37
1.4 Categories of Actors in an Amended Policy Community Approach 45
1.5 A Policy Transfer Framework 53
1.6 The Characteristics of Policy Communities, Epistemic Communities, Policy Transfer Networks and Change Networks 65

3.1 Summary of Recommendations Related to Institutional Arrangements to Manage the Australian Coastal Zone 135
3.2 Outline of Current Status of State and Territory Coastal Policies 146

7.1 Policy Actions that Changed Ocean Policy Development and the Oceans Policy Community 301